

gested that the library connected with his bureau might be used as a nucleus for a public library. All of these things were cited by The Star to show that the time was ripe for action. A city of 250,000 population demanded the library; 63,000 school children demanded the library; 23,000 District workingmen demanded the library. It was suggested that the books could be obtained from duplicates in the Congressional Library and in the departmental libraries. The Star steadfastly contended that literary starvation in the midst of such plenty was an unnecessary and a cruel deprivation.

To excite a feeling of pride, that action might be secured, The Star showed that London, with its great library of the British Museum, containing two million books, had thirty local free libraries and many special ones. Paris, besides its great national library, had sixty-four public libraries, and Berlin had twenty-five, while Washington had none. "No citizen," declared The Star, "could erect to himself a nobler memorial" than to supply this need.

The Municipal Public Library.

This was the foundation for the present white marble structure which adorns Mount Vernon Square. The Washington Board of Trade, following the suggestion of The Star, took the matter up and appointed a committee on public library. Mr. Theodore W. Noyes, associate editor of The Star, was made chairman of this committee. In 1894 the committee made a report, through Mr. Noyes. This report set forth the great need of the city for a public library, and concluded with the draft of a bill to be introduced in Congress for the establishment of a "free and public departmental library and reading room in the District of Columbia." The library, according to this bill, was to be located in the new city post office and was to be managed by a board of eleven trustees. June 3, 1896, Congress passed a modified form of this bill, creating a tax-sustained public library. The institution was to be governed by a board of nine trustees, and was to be located in some convenient place to be selected by the District Commissioners. The first appropriation for the library was contained in the District of Columbia appropriation bill for 1898, and provided for the salaries of a librarian and two assistant librarians; also for rent, fuel, etc.; in all, \$6,720. Without delay the appropriation was utilized and the library established. The Commissioners appointed the nine trustees. Mr. Noyes was made one of the number and chosen chairman of the board, which consisted of S. W. Woodward, B. H. Warner, J. B. Larnier, A. R. Spofford, J. T. DuBois, R. R. Perry, T. W. Noyes, C. J. Bell and R. H. Thayer. A modest building at 1326 New York avenue was recommended by the trustees and selected by the Commissioners. The books which constituted this simple beginning were obtained entirely by private donation and numbered 15,000 volumes. The largest cash donations for the purchase of books were made by Mr. Crosby S. Noyes, \$1,000; Woodward & Lothrop, \$1,000; Mr. Charles C. Glover, \$250; Mr. John R. McLean, \$250, and Mr. James T. DuBois, who donated the interest on \$2,000 and agreed to increase the amount later to \$5,000, the fund to be known as the "Henry Pastor Memorial Fund" and to be devoted to the purchase of scientific periodicals.

Fifteen hundred books were donated from the estate of Anthony Pollok, while the incorporated Washington City Free Library turned over all of its books to the new institution, it being by far the largest book contributor. Thus the first public library of Washington began its career with the beginning of the fiscal year 1898, with the avowed purpose on the part of its trustees to conduct it in accordance with the general recognition of the important educational function of a free circulating library and reading room, accessible at hours convenient both for the student in school and college and the working people, whose day-



THE OLD CONGRESSIONAL LIBRARY.

light hours are largely occupied in bread-winning.

How the New Building Was Secured.

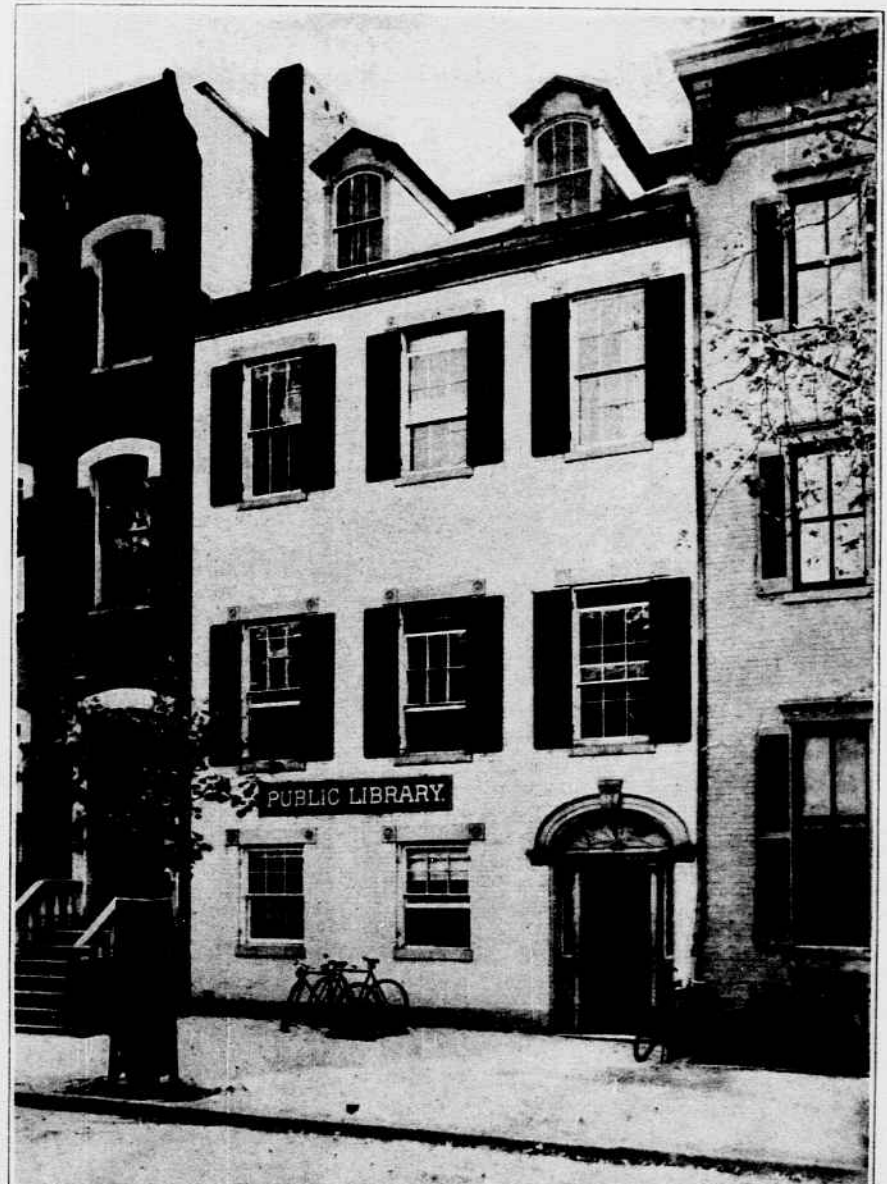
Rapid development followed the solid legislative foundation laid for the public library. On the 12th day of January, 1899, Mr. Andrew Carnegie, the millionaire steel manufacturer and noted philanthropist, whose donations to cities for libraries were then just beginning to attract wide attention, came to Washington and called at the White House. While he was waiting to see President McKinley he was chatting with Mr. B. H. Warner, a member of the board of trustees of the public library. Mr. Warner explained to him the library enterprise and Mr. Carnegie straightway offered to contribute \$250,000 to build a home for the new library, provided a site for the building could be secured and the support of the institution insured. The trustees and other friends of the library lost no time in getting to work to meet Mr. Carnegie's requisitions. Congress was appealed to; The Star, as usual, was at work at once, both in its news columns and on the editorial page. The advantage of the offer was discussed. The disadvantage of allowing it to be lost

by default was set forth. The availability of sites was also a feature of animated discussion, as was the legislation which was immediately considered in Congress. In

a few days less than three months Mr. Carnegie's offer was followed by the passage of legislation authorizing its acceptance and designating Mount Vernon Square



THE NEW CONGRESSIONAL LIBRARY.



THE FIRST WASHINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING.